

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed on January 16, 2004, claims 1-3, 5-9, 11-15 and 17-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishida et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,845,248) in view of Oikawa et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,396,577); and claims 4, 10 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishida in view of Oikawa et al. and further in view of Degen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,386,493). The foregoing rejections are respectively traversed.

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 13, 15 and 16 are amended and claims 1-21 are added.

Claims 1-21 are pending in the subject application, of which claims 1, 7 and 13 are independent.

Nishida et al. discusses an apparatus for reading out textual information with synthesized speech and a teletext receiver. The apparatus includes a buffer memory, a keyword/read-out region storing unit to store a previously specified keyword and a region of textual information, the region being read out and including the keyword; a read-out region retrieving unit to retrieve the keyword stored in the keyword/read-out region storing unit and outputted from the buffer memory. A speech synthesizing unit which converts character codes outputted from the buffer memory into a synthesized speech signal which is then converted into synthesized speech (see column 2, lines 31-48). In the Office Action, the Examiner admits that Nishida et al. fails to disclose "a read-out section that performs text-to-speech" conversion according to a second speech parameter until it finds a certain keyword as disclosed in claims 1, 7 and 13. In addition, unlike the claimed invention, Nishida et al. also fails to disclose a second speech parameter which is variable and is different from a first speech parameter based on which a document is read.

Oikawa et al. discusses a speech synthesis apparatus for rapid speed reading. In Oikawa et al., speech synthesis is carried out by controller several stages which text portion should be skipped, or at which speed, the text portions should be synthesized, in response to a speed instruction and importance degree information which is input into the speech synthesis apparatus. That is, importance degree information is registered with respect to each text portion of a document, so that the document may be read at a speed corresponding to the importance degree information. Thus, the importance degree information is fixed with respect to each text portion of the document.

Degen et al. discusses an apparatus and method for playing back audio at a faster or slower rate without pitch distortion. The apparatus includes a double buffering system in order to perform all of the desired calculations in real time and a time stretching technique to decrease or increase a playback rate (see column 12, lines 26-53).

Nishida et al. and Oikawa et al., individually or combined, fail to discuss a document read-out apparatus comprising "a read-out section configured to read out the document according to a second speech parameter which is variable and is different from the first speech parameter, until a keyword within the document," as in amended claim 1 from which claims 2-3 and 5-6 depend. Also, claims 7 and 13 have been amended to recite similar limitations as those in claim 1 mentioned above. Thus, Nishida et. al and Oikawa et al., individually or combined, also fail to disclose the limitations as recited in amended claims 7 and 13 from which claims 8-9, 11-15 and 17-18 respectively depend.

Further, claims dependent claims 2-3, 5-6, 8-9, 11-15 and 17-18 recited patentably distinguishing features of their own, for example, claim 3 recites "a second specifying section configured to variably specify the second speech parameter".

Thus, claims 1-3, 5-9, 11-15 and 17-18 patentably distinguish over the combination of Nishida et al. in view of Oikawa et al.

With regard to claims 4, 10 and 16, as mentioned above, neither Nishida et al. nor Oikawa et al., individually or combined, disclose all of the limitations as recited in claims 1, 7 and 13 from which claims 4, 10 and 16 respectively depend. Thus, although Degen et al. discloses "a double buffering system" it fails to disclose the deficiencies of Nishida et al. and Oikawa et al. Thus, the combination of Nishida et al. in view of Oikawa et al. and further in view of Degen et al. fails to establish a prima facie case of obviousness. Accordingly, claims 4, 10 and 16 patentably distinguish over the combination of Nishida et al. in view of Oikawa et al. and further in view of Degen et al.

Withdrawal of the foregoing rejections is respectfully requested.

If there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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